



# Memorandum

**TO:** COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Joseph Horwedel

**SUBJECT:** COYOTE VALLEY SPECIFIC  
PLAN STATUS REPORT

**DATE:** March 26, 2007

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Approved

Date

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 2

**SNI AREA:** Not Applicable

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Community and Economic Development Committee accept the status report on the Coyote Valley Specific Plan (CVSP) process.

## **OUTCOME**

The following information will provide the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee with an overview and status report on the recent and future activities of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan process, including the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

## **BACKGROUND**

### Coyote Valley Specific Plan

In August 2002, the City Council voted unanimously to initiate a specific plan for Coyote Valley. At that time, the Council appointed a 20-member Task Force, and specified 16 Vision and Expected Outcome Statements to guide the preparation of the Plan.

The CVSP proposes the development of a minimum of 25,000 residential units and 50,000 new jobs on approximately 3,400 acres in northern and mid-Coyote Valley. The CVSP would create a new pedestrian and transit-oriented community in San Jose, with a projected population of approximately 70,000 to 80,000 people (based on Census 2000 data). The area referred to as the South Coyote Valley Greenbelt (approximately 3,500 acres) is intended to remain a permanent non-urban buffer between San Jose and Morgan Hill.

The CVSP includes land uses such as workplace, residential, retail, and mixed use development, as well as structured/shared parking, and new roadways, together with a rich network of passive and active open spaces. The new roadways include a main multi-functional Parkway and an extension of Bailey Avenue to the southwest towards the Almaden Valley. The Plan includes an internal transit system with a connection to a proposed multi-modal Caltrain station on the west side of the existing Caltrain line. Additionally the plan includes schools, a library, parks, trails, playfields, and services and utilities. Also, the CVSP includes a lake and urban canal, and proposes to relocate and restore Fisher Creek, and maintain a permanent non-urban buffer or Greenbelt in south Coyote Valley. Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to occur over a 25 to 50 year timeframe.

The City Council has had discussion and provided direction as appropriate at key milestones, including the following:

- September 2004 - City Council accepted the “Composite Framework” of major infrastructure elements for the development of the Plan.
- January 2005 - City Council accepted the Draft land Use Plan Concept.
- April 2005 - City Council accepted the approach for the alternatives for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
- January 2006 - City Council accepted the Project Description, the basis for the Initial Draft Specific Plan and the EIR.
- March 2006 - City Council accepted the proposed elements of the Greenbelt Strategy.
- December 2006 - City Council accepted a status report on the Initial Draft CVSP.
- March 2007 – City Council accepted the Draft Water Supply Evaluation.

#### Environmental Impact Report

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared if a project may have one or more significant impacts on the environment. A significant effect on the environment is defined under CEQA as a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment. Due to the size of CVSP and potential for significant environmental impacts, an EIR has been prepared for the project.

The purpose of an EIR is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIR will also identify alternatives, and disclose possible ways to reduce or avoid potential significant environmental damage. An EIR is also prepared to facilitate project decisions that are informed and balanced and demonstrate that the environment is being considered and protected. An EIR will identify significant environmental impacts, and if the EIR is found complete and in conformance with CEQA, the City must make findings on whether the significant impacts have been substantially reduced or avoided. If environmental impacts have not been substantially reduced or avoided the City must also disclose to the public (make findings) regarding the reasons why the project was approved in the manner chosen despite its significant impacts to the environment.

**ANALYSIS**

The Draft EIR prepared for Coyote Valley Specific Plan provides objective information regarding the environmental consequences of the proposed project (see attached Summary Section of the Draft EIR). The CVSP DEIR focuses on the following subject areas:

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Summary of Impacts Analyzed</b>
Land Use	Open space; agricultural lands; annexation; and consistency with land use plans and policies.
Transportation and Traffic	Existing and future Coyote Valley intersections; freeway segments; transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities; emergency access; parking; traffic spillover; construction traffic; and other related transportation analyses.
Noise and Vibration	Short/long-term construction noise; long-term noise outside of CVSP; and vibration.
Air Quality	Short-term construction; long-term local/regional air-quality; and consistency with clean air planning efforts.
Cultural Resources	Prehistoric archaeological resources; historic archaeological resources; historic resources; historic architectural resources; unique geologic and paleontological resources; and arboricultural resources.
Biological Resources	Biological habitats, including developed areas, agricultural fields, non-native grassland, coastal sage-chaparral scrub, wetlands and open water, riparian communities, coast/valley oak woodland, and serpentine grassland; special status plant and animal species; wildlife movement; and nitrogen deposition.
Geology	Seismicity; land slides; subsidence; expansive soils; naturally occurring asbestos; and liquefaction.
Hydrology and Water Quality	Flooding; groundwater resources; water quality; and stream erosion.

<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Summary of Impacts Analyzed</b>
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Short-term construction related impacts; surrounding development; impacts to future development from past uses; hazardous materials post construction.
Visual and Aesthetics	Scenic vistas; scenic resources; visual character; light or glare; and shade/shadow.
Utilities and Service Systems	Water service and supply; sanitary sewer/wastewater treatment systems; San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant; storm drainage; solid waste; electricity, natural gas; and telephone/communication services.
Energy	Energy use; and mineral resources.
Population, Jobs, and Housing	Jobs/housing balance.
Public Services	Fire protection; police protection; schools; parks and recreation; and libraries.
Global Climate Change	CVSP contribution and affects to Coyote Valley from global climate change.

As required by State law, the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Draft EIR also analyzes the cumulative impacts of the proposed project. Cumulative impacts refer to two or more individual effects, which when combined, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The purpose of the cumulative analysis is to allow decision-makers to better understand the potential impacts which might result from approval of past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects, in conjunction with the proposed project addressed in this DEIR. This analysis will provide valuable information to inform key policy decisions regarding the extent and timing of the future development of the Coyote Valley.

CEQA also requires an EIR to analyze a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives that will foster informed decision making and public discussion. The CVSP DEIR analyzes several potentially feasible alternatives.

Typically, a Draft Environmental Impact Report is available for public comment for 45 days. Due to the size and complexity of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan, its Draft EIR will circulate for a 60-day public review period. During this review period the City will hold two public meetings to allow for additional opportunities to provide comments on the CVSP DEIR (in addition to

submitted written comments). Following the public review period the City will respond to the issues raised by the reviewers. If significant new information is added to the DEIR after the beginning of the public review period the City will recirculate the DEIR.

#### Next Steps

The availability of the DEIR will inform the next key step in the Coyote Valley planning process, which is the refinement of the land use plan and draft policy document. The Initial Draft Specific Plan may change to respond to comments and suggestions received during public discussions of the Initial Draft, identify opportunities to avoid or reduce the potential environmental impacts identified in the DEIR and strengthen the overall sustainability foundation of the CVSP. Another aspect of the Plan Refinement process will entail updating of the fiscal and economic analyses to ensure the Plan is financially feasible for private development. The Plan Refinement effort will result in a revised Draft CVSP document, to be published for public review during the summer.

As noted above, absent the need to recirculate the DEIR, the goal is to complete the Plan Refinement process and prepare the DEIR and Draft CVSP for public hearings by the end of 2007.

#### Task Force Membership Update

Since the December, 2006 progress report to the City Council, one Task Force member, Craig Edgerton, has resigned from the organization he represented on the Task Force, the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. Mr. Edgerton is also a member of the Silicon Valley Land Conservancy and he continues to provide a valuable contribution to the Task Force process, irrespective of his change of organization affiliation.

### **POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

Not Applicable

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**



**Criteria 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater.

**(Required: Website Posting)**



**Criteria 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**



**Criteria 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

Although this item does not meet any of the above criteria, the degree of outreach and public participation involved in the CVSP process is unprecedented for any previous planning effort in San Jose. The CVSP outreach program included coordination with many other governmental agencies, as well as the participation of affected property owners, developers, residents, and other community stakeholders. To date, there have been 53 Task Force meetings, 13 community meetings and numerous presentations to local agencies and commissions. Weekend workshops have drawn an average attendance of over 140 attendees, with the monthly Task Force meetings averaging approximately 50 people. A Technical Advisory Committee with public agencies and non-profit organizations has met 26 times, and there have been numerous technical sub-committee and focus group meetings.

The CVSP process is also supported by a frequently updated website at [www.sanjoseca.gov/coyotevalley/](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/coyotevalley/). The website is a critical outreach tool as it allows 24-hour-a-day, real time access to announcements of upcoming CVSP events, as well as all agendas, reports, presentations, and publications that have previously been discussed at Task Force meetings and community workshops. It has also enabled people from far and wide to transmit their input or inquiries to staff on the CVSP via email. Community meetings are routinely advertised in community newspapers and by post card mailings and e-mail notifications. The CVSP process has had television, radio, and newspaper coverage. Seven community newsletters and a Specific Plan Progress Report Brochure have been sent to a 1,600-person database to keep the public apprised of critical stages of the planning process.

## **COORDINATION**

The Specific Plan and EIR effort involves almost all City Departments and many outside local, state, and federal agencies, including the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Valley Transportation Agency, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, many of who have been participating actively in the planning process. Preparation of this memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

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Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

For questions please contact Laurel Prevetti or Stan Ketchum at 408-535-7800.

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